

Robert Spencer
Gila

SUMO CLUB

A brief description of the political activities of the Sumo Kyo-kai has already been forthcoming, some mention having been made of the relation of the club to such organizations as the so-called Issei Vigilante Committee of both camps, the Kibei clubs and the like.

With the apprehension of a number of so-called agitators by the FBI on February 18, 1943, and their consequent confinement in isolation centers and internment camps, the backbone of the Sumo Club as a political pressure group was broken. Mention was made of the Tada assault case in Canal Camp, in which the Sumo organization seemed to have acted as a strong arm agency. The assault very likely was perpetrated by some of the young men active in the Sumo club at the behest of the Kenkyu-kai, or Vigilante Committee. The relationship between the Sumo club and these recalcitrant or dissatisfied groups becomes clear when the structure of the Sumo club itself is understood. Sumo is the national sport of Japan, and is a rather rough and arduous form of athletics. Young men only participate, since training for sumo matches is rather rigorous. The actual membership of the Sumo club, however, is not confined to the younger athletes. They in fact form a very inconsequential part of the membership of the club. Actual leadership in the organization rests in a committee of older men who follow the matches, who arrange them, and whose gambling interest in the organization is keen. Anyone may become a member of the Gila

Robert Spencer
Gila

2.

Sumo Honbu, as the organization is formally called, by paying a sum of money as a kind of subsidy to the club. The number of such older men so enlisted in the organization is fairly large. They are Issei who in their youth very likely took an active part in the sport, and whose interest remains today in the Relocation Center. Sumo clubs in California were rather numerous, and particularly in the Los Angeles area there is a large number of individuals interested in sumo. Northern California did not, seemingly, have the same interest in the sport which was manifest in Southern California. The best athletes reputedly came from Southern California, and it is noteworthy that there was a tremendous interest in the sport in the Santa Anita Assembly Center, and that there continues to be a marked interest among the Santa Anita evacuees in the Arkansas projects and at Poston. It is said in fact that at Santa Anita when one of the tournaments was held that more than 5,000 people occupied the grandstand in order to witness the matches. At Gila the group is small, and most of the membership comes from the Santa Anita Assembly Center, with few partisans from the San Joaquin Valley and Northern California. There was some marked interest in the sport in the ~~Tulare~~^{Turlock} Assembly Center, but this was apparently not so keen as at San^{ta} Anita. Tulare had virtually no sumo. The older men who constitute the real membership of the Sumo club number at Gila in Butte Camp about 40-50. These men are always on hand for meetings of the club. It is up to them to decide the policy, and it was they who formulated the Sumo club's constitution at Gila. The number in Canal Camp is

slightly smaller than that in Butte. The athletes or wrestlers themselves seem to have no voice in the formally organized club, and simply participate in the athletic events. They are not obliged to practice or to wrestle in every tournament, nor is there any concept of an actual team. While it is true that sometimes Butte and Canal may meet for wrestling matches as teams, the membership of such teams is selected at random by the older men who are in charge of the organization.

It is easy to see then how the Sumo club, under the influence of the Issei Vigilante Committee could have functioned as a pressure group. It is not the athletes themselves, but rather the directors who sought to make use of the organization as a political tool. When this is understood, it is easily seen how the sumo club could have brought disfavor on itself from the administrative point of view. Furthermore, some mention has already been made of the relationship of the Sumo club to the Community Activities section. As a formal organization, the Sumo club could be recognized by the Community Activities, and so accorded quarters, official representation on the Community Activities staff, and on the Community Activities council, and could also place some of its members and directors on the Work Corps as ~~agitators~~, caretakers, instructors, timekeepers, and so on. In this way, so far as the administration was concerned, the Sumo club was a functioning body within the community. This is true of both camps. Formal recognition being given by Gaba in

Robert Spencer
Gila

4.

Canal, who recognized the demand for a Sumo club, and similarly by Hoffman, then Acting head of Community Services in Butte. The result was that the Sumo club was able, in Butte, to hire six janitors or caretakers, four instructors, and to place some of its officers on the CAS payroll, as well as to be provided with a recreation hall as a dressing room and club house. The relationship with the CAS of all such organizations of a more purely Japanese type, sumo, judo, kendo, dramatics and the like, was never particularly satisfactory because the membership banded together somewhat, and the administration felt that the employees of the CAS assigned to sumo were not giving their best efforts to the work. The result was a number of complaints were voiced against these organizations and an attempt was made to force the employees to put in their 44 hour week. Actually, the work they had to do was very limited, and an attempt was made on the part of these organizations to hire as many individuals as possible. The principal work of the janitor, for example, is to see that the ring used by the wrestlers is kept in order, that salt and water are provided for practice matches, and to sweep out the club house. Some of the other CAS employees, particularly the Nisei, complained that these sumo employees were not doing their share of the CAS work. The unfortunate result was that the problem was never solved, and these more purely Japanese organizations have acted as a kind of divisive factor, giving rise for another type of split in the community.

Sumo, as the national sport of Japan, and being particularly

concerned with the carrying on of a Japanese tradition, arouses a Nisei resentment, and virtually no Nisei either participates or is interested in the Sumo club. On the contrary, many Nisei feel that the perpetuation of such purely Japanese behavior reflects unfavorably on the whole community. There is undeniably some truth in this contention, inasmuch as the writer calls to mind a recent diatribe against judo at Poston by the Dies Committee. Of sumo it must be said that the sport is intensely nationalistic. How this works out will be discussed in the pages to follow.

The Gila community has in its history up to the time of present writing two very specific phases. The first of these is the period of settlement and unrest, and the second is the emphasis on resettlement and the gradual of the community which is still going on. In the first stage, the consensus of evacuees was that the community could be considered virtually permanent, and a terrific play was made by various groups for power and prestige directed to control in the political life of the community. When, however, some of the more outspoken and outstanding individuals in the community were apprehended and it became clear that the resettlement emphasis was uppermost, this concerted attempt on the part of various groups died away, with the result that many politically minded organizations ceased all political activities and became concerned with the carrying out of the original purpose of their particular club or organization. The Kibei club, it will be remembered, was designed to be a social club, but was one of the most active of the political pressure

groups in the early phase of the center. With the apprehension of some of the leaders, and a shifting of WRA policy and clarification of this policy, the Kibei club in both camps has now become what it was originally intended to be, merely a social club. As has been pointed out, in fact, in Canal as soon as the political implications were removed, the Kibei club ceased to exist, while in Butte very little is heard of this organization at the present time. The same thing is true of the Sumo club. It is pointed out above that this organization attempted to assert itself as an aid to the Kibei and Issei groups and that in fact there was a certain overlapping of membership by Issei and Kibei in these respective organizations. In Butte Camp, some description has been already accorded to the activities of the erstwhile head of the board of governors of the Kibei club, Fukumoto. Fukumoto in addition to his Kibei activities was a definite partisan of the sumo organization. Following his apprehension, however, the direct communication between Kibei and Sumo was broken. Recreation hall 54 had been assigned to the Kibei club as its social hall and gathering place. Fukumoto had so influenced the Sumo club that the sumo dojo had been placed directly outside of the Kibei club, and all practice, all matches and so on were held there often under the direction and sponsorship of the young peoples' association. However, when it became apparent that troublemakers, so-called, might be removed from the community, and with the apprehension of such a dissatisfied spirit as Fukumoto, the membership of the Sumo club feared that their efforts to maintain this form of Japanese entertainment

Robert Spencer
Gila

7.

might be definitely curtailed. Their leadership made an attempt to break away from all association with the Kibei and the Issei organizations, and in this they were largely successful. With the dissolution of the *Kyowa Kai* and the breakup of the Kibei club in Butte, the Sumo organization appeared before Mr. Hoffman and requested allocation of quarters in some other part of the community, and permission to move the dojo away from the Kibei club. This move was sponsored by the Sumo participants and the president of the Sumo club, an Issei named Tanaka, a rather interesting personality, had ever opposed any aspirations of a political nature which existed in the Sumo organization, and had always emphasized the carrying on of the sport for its own sake. Tanaka had been a fruit packer in Los Angeles prior to evacuation, and was a rather wealthy man. He was formerly a high ranking wrestler in Japan, and has a good reputation as a wrestler in California. He is 42 years old and is marked by a particularly aggressive and outspoken character. On the whole, his personality is so aggressive as to be decidedly unpleasant, and he is a very capable leader for the organization. It is through his efforts for the most part that the Sumo club was pulled away from the *Kyowa Kai* to save it inasmuch as there was considerable pressure that it smacked too much of the Japanese ideal. Tanaka has drawn the club together and was successful in obtaining half of the recreation hall in block 52 as the clubroom for the Sumo organization. The dojo itself is now located in the firebreak between 52 and 54, a

Robert Spencer
Gila

8.

block and a half away from the Kibei club. Due to the Santa Anita interest in the sport another dojo was erected in block 28, which is used sometimes by participants in the sport. The club is now a fairly compact unit brought together to sponsor athletics. Its president is the man described above, who carries all the business of the organization and is paid for his activities by the CAS, being accorded a \$19.00 position. The other men who direct the organization are Issei, many of whom are fairly distinguished as wrestlers and who take part as observers, referees, caretakers and general "stockholders" in the organization. All of these members have paid something to the organization for the privilege of obtaining membership. In Canal, virtually the same situation exists. The club has apparently broken away from the Issei and Kibei and is for the most part an athletic club. Canal sumo club is not as well understood by the writer, however, as that in Butte, since the writer became a member of the Butte Sumo Honbu and engaged in the matches as a participant. It may be understood that if Sumo clubs of both camps are not now active athletic organizations for the purpose of carrying out athletics the position of the club in relation to the community today is more clearly defined. The leaders in the club, that is the Issei who do not participate in the matches, must be kept in mind as distinguishable from the athletes themselves, although the emphasis centers on the wrestling, management, social prestige, leadership and other aspects of the club, rest not in the athletes but rather in the recognized membership of Issei. The athletes

are members only as they care to participate, but it is not incumbent upon them to do so as in the case of judo. It is conceived that the moral precepts brought about by judo are of a higher plane than those of sumo. One is committed to participate in judo, but may enter sumo as one wishes.

Because sumo is so completely a Japanese cultural manifestation, it will be well to analyze the club itself in terms of its cultural connotations and to describe what happens in a sumo match and what the accompanying ritual, paraphernalia and the like are. It is stated above that sumo is the national sport of Japan. It is not seasonable as are many sports in this country and Japan, but sumo matches may be carried out throughout the year. It is connected intimately with Shinto, and the observation of animistic and even shamanistic practices may be noted. It is also quite intimately connected with the bushido concept and the idea of what is known as the spirit of Japan, or Yamato-damashi. It is this Yamato-damashi concept which demands of young men of Japanese culture that they participate in this sport. Judo receives a certain sanction from the Buddhists in that it is conceived by physical effort and good sportsmanship and a higher plane of contemplation may be reached. Sumo is at variance with Buddhism. It tends to exploit the individual to give him prestige and to enable him to show himself as a true warrior and son of Japan. The Buddhists do not think very highly of sumo, and it is the Shintoist who

follows it. Since evacuation greater attention has been paid to sumo because by sumo many individuals feel themselves more closely identified with the mother country. It is interesting to note that all of the participants without exception at Gila are Kibei. Japanese is the spoken language at the matches and during the practice bouts. It is thought a bit unseemingly to use any other language but Japanese and, indeed, the writer in speaking while participating in matches in the sumo dojo was cautioned either to use Japanese or not to speak at all. The relation of sumo to **S**hinto will be brought out more clearly in the description of a match.

The wrestling takes place in the sumo dojo which is a raised mound of earth, flat at the top, and roughly 25 x 25 ft. This mound is perfectly square. A scaffolding is built over the mound to poles which are placed in each corner of the square. The square itself is oriented to the north. The poles at the corner of the square are placed in intermediate positions, such as in the northwest and northeast, and so on. At the top of the poles is a superstructure which creates a kind of dome effect over the mound which is the wrestlers ring. When matches are held, this whole superstructure is covered with bunting or with bright colored cloth of some kind. Enclosed here are drawings of the sumo mound and superstructure. In the center of the mound and under the arc of the superstructure is a ring marked out, by packs of straw sunk into the earth. This ring is roughly 12 ft. in diameter. It is placed in the very center of

of the mound and is filled inside with rather soft earth which is kept constantly moistened and smooth. It is in this ring that the actual wrestling takes place. The wrestling is begun in the center of the ring, and upon agreement by the wrestlers, as will be described later. The wrestling begins.

The purpose of the sport is to force the opponent outside of the 12 ft. ring or to make some part of his body touch the ground within the ring itself. Thus the person may win by either throwing his opponent out of the ring or to the ground within the ring. This is the entire object of the sport. It is quite scientific, however, inasmuch as the various holds are used and something of the judo principle is retained. Unlike American or European wrestling, this sport does not allow for contests on the ground. All of the effort of sumo must be concentrated while the two individuals are standing on their feet. In Japan some contests are held regularly in various large cities, and as a sport it is a favorite army pastime. There are professional wrestlers in Japan, however, who aim at great height and weight which is a definite asset in the sport. These professional wrestlers in Japan often attain a height of six feet and eat great quantities of food in order to achieve as much weight as possible. A good sumo wrestler in Japan ought to be above middle height, weigh at least 250-300 lbs. The sumoist in Japan achieves the same notoriety and publicity as a successful prize fighter might in this country. This is a fair comparison, since sumo in Japan seems to occupy the

same place as prize fighting here. For this reason, it is considered by many Japanese just a bit on the vulgar side. In Japan, there are hangers on of sumo who are comparable to the professional prize fighting fan or racetrack tout in this country. Although sumo is the national sport, and though it has long had sanction from the sumarai, it is not today thought to occupy as high a plane as it once did under the shogun. In Japan, moreover, the professional sumo wrestler generally wears his hair in a little queue, and is thus distinguishable from other men.

These aspects of sumo have, more or less, been lost in this country, and while the heavier and stronger and taller individuals in the Relocation Center have tended to drift into the sport, nevertheless, the pigtail is not retained, nor is there such a great emphasis on weight. Unlike the Japanese sumo^{ist}, the Kibei in this country do not train by eating. Some attempt is made to match people of even weight and skill. Like other forms of Japanese sports, the participants are graded in terms of skill, and it is possible to change one's grade or to rise progressively as one's skill is demonstrated. No attention is paid to weights but as an interesting feature of acculturation in this country the tendency to match people of equal weight in addition to match people of equal skill is present.

Somewhat like go, there are nine grades and sumoists may rise successively from one grade to another. The grades, however, are arbitrarily, and rather unlike the go grades which are established

by the international go council in Tokyo. The grades in the Relocation Centers, for example, are simply made up from the material on hand, the best man being placed in grade one and the worst in grade nine, and so on. This grading, however, is not adhered to with any degree of accuracy. It is recognized in Japan, however, as a means of determining the position of a sumo expert. Tanaka himself, as a former sumo wrestler in Japan, was a holder of a black belt, given also in sumo as in judo, and achieved grade two in Japan, a rather enviable accomplishment. In judo, once the black belt is conferred it may not be removed. In sumo, however, the black belt is something like a title, and it is necessary to defend one's belt once it is awarded. No attention is given to this type of owner in this country. Furthermore, in the Relocation Center the emphasis on sumo is ^{as} a sport rather than as a means of gaining prestige. Some men vie for prizes, and in matches prizes are always given to every participant. Consolation prizes for the loser and special awards for the winner are given, as will be described later.

The wrestlers adopt the Japanese sash, or loin cloth, when engaged in the sport. An individual enters the ring naked except for this. This sash is a piece of canvas or heavy cloth, sometimes said to be silk, about a foot wide, and from 8-12 ft. long. It is folded once and drawn between the legs, the remainder being wound around the hips and tied securely in the back. A very firm support is thus given since the belt is very securely fastened. The piece drawn through the crotch is open and very often contains

writing indicating the name of the wearer or the rank, or a motto for good luck. This piece is open and usually forms an apron. In wrestling, any part of this garment may be grasped, and indeed many holds are dependent upon grasping it. The wrestler enters the ring with bare feet and wears no other apparel but this sash or loin cloth.

Attention may now be turned to a practice match which, at Gila, takes place nearly every night. The pattern of Japanese sumo is followed pretty completely throughout. After the participants have dressed in the club house they go out in a body, some of them swaggering somewhat, to the dojo where they prepare to go into the ring. A warm-up is at first necessary. Since one is at a disadvantage if one should stand erect, it is necessary to maintain a squatting position and exercises must be undergone so as to prevent fatigue in this position. This exercise practiced by almost all sumo wrestlers is practically a ritual. It consists of squatting about halfway to the ground, and of standing very flat footed and then of lifting one leg as far as possible to the side coming down hard on the ball of the foot and then repeating the process with the other leg. This is a very arduous exercise and can be very gracefully done, but requires practice. The muscles of the thigh and stomach are built by this exercise, and each movement is undoubtedly of benefit to the sport. The wrestlers do this off to the side of the mound. At the southwest corner of each dojo a pole has been placed upright in the ground and is surrounded by soft dirt. It is on this that

the wrestlers do this exercise, after which they pay push, pull, and otherwise limber up. On practice nights at Butte, Tanaka acts as the coach and calls the matches, matching this individual against that, while the actual wrestling instruction is under the direction of a young Japanese named Hamanaka. Hamanaka is a young man from the Fresno district, who has done a good deal of judo, sumo and American wrestling. In 1936 he was runner-up for the 156 lb. class Olympic games wrestling team. He is exceedingly skilled in all forms of wrestling, and now weighs perhaps 180 lbs. He is recognized as a professional sumo teacher, and made his living at this sport prior to evacuation. He is employed as instructor by CAS at the present time. Maintaining himself in splendid physical condition he will often engage the entire sumo group in one evening, going for five or six falls with each of them. This is a rather phenomenal achievement since without stopping he is able to run through perhaps 50 or 60 bouts seemingly without becoming winded or exhausted. In practice, he generally meets each member of a team each night and corrects the errors of their approach and attack, and gives instruction to them.

When the wrestlers have limbered up and are ready to begin, the caretaker of the dojo comes forward and places a box of salt at the post on the southwest corner and the northeast corner of the ring, a bucket of water and, oddly enough, a box of Kleenex, are placed at the side of this post also. . The wrestlers enter the ring from the west and from the east. A challenger usually

enters from the west. A champion from the east. The concept of the rising sun in the east is in accordance with the bushido idea and the maintenance of the Japanese spirit, or Yamato-damashi. Thus, a winner of a previous bout generally enters from the east, and a man who has won no bouts enters from the west. The terms regularly used for this are nishi, east, and higashi, west. The man standing at the east is always considered to be the better; when an announcement of a match is made the name of the man standing at the east end of the ring is always given first. This is always strictly observed. Two wrestlers enter the ring respectively from the east and west, approach each other on the mound and go as far as the entrance of the circle. Here they stop and bow low to one another. They then go over to their respective corners, the posts where the buckets of water are left, the mouth is rinsed with water and generally dried with a piece of Kleenex and then each takes a handful of salt from the box which is fastened to the post. This salt is taken to the ring and as each man enters the ring he casts it about in front of him. The reason for this is that salt is considered to be a purifying agent. It is conceived to cleanse the body and the mind and to purify the ground on which the wrestling is to take place. The Shinto concept of a malignant earth deity is borne out here, and it is conceived that the earth will injure the individual if it is not placated by salt in this manner. This is believe by those who participate in sumo. If a man gets off to a false start at the beginning of the match he will often hold up the match and return for more salt.

Some individuals are more extreme than others in the use of salt. The writer has noticed some who will annoint their bodies completely with salt as they stand at the post ready to enter the ring. Sometimes before entering the ring, or while waiting for an opponent to finish with his water or his annointment of salt, an individual will engage again in the limbering up exercise. When they have entered the ring, the two wrestlers will advance to the very center, or as close to the center as they possibly can get, and will again perform this limbering up exercise of shifting from one leg to the other. They are then ready to wrestle. They squat down and place their closed fists on the ground in front of one another. Generally, a man will place one fist on the ground and then hold the other fist until he sees that his opponent's hands are resting on the ground and allow his own fist to touch his; as soon as all of the hands have touched the ground the match is begun.

The wrestlers generally charge one another in a manner quite analogous to a line charge in American football. In fact, very much the same stance is used as by a football lineman. An attempt is made to grasp the opponent's belt or simply to push him outside of the ring, if the push fails the belt is grasped, then various holds are resorted to to make the individual fall down, or to throw him out of the ring altogether. Both wrestlers will generally grasp each other's belts and tug and push and pull for some time if they are of equal weight and strength skill. A heavier man has the advantage since by his charge he can throw his lighter

opponent to the ground. Fists may not be used but elbows and open hand striking is permissible. Scratching or biting is not allowed. It is quite customary to see an individual push his opponent to the edge of the ring and to see the opponent press himself on the packs of straw at the end of the ring and so manoeuvre a turn that forces the aggressor out of the ring first. It is quite common for one opponent to lift and carry the other. The writer, because of his height and weight, found this particularly expedient with lighter opponents. Sometimes various judo holds are used, body slams and other holds making use of leverage are fairly common.

In practice, all the results of each match are kept, and even in practice an individual may become raised in grade. There are various forms of sumo which are used in practice. Two individuals may be matched against each other and followed by another two. They may go for four, five or six falls. The one who has won the largest number of falls is credited with having one. Sometimes, a game somewhat comparable to the European children's game of King of the Mountain is played, the winner always sitting in the ring and staying in as long as he can maintain himself there. If he is thrown, his place is taken by the next winner. After a fall, and the individuals are ready to leave the ring, both retire to the edge of the ring where again a deep bow is given. It is in practice where the purest form of sport is seen. No prizes or awards being given for practice, but only in tournaments.

If two individuals are ready to wrestle and one doesn't feel that he is quite prepared, he may drop to one knee and shout "mata" meaning wait, and thus the opponent is obliged to hold off and they may again enter the center of the ring. This is done frequently in order to disconcert the opponent or to put him off guard. Frequently both wrestlers will be tense and ready to go, when one of them will fail to place his fist on the ground, but will simply get up and go back to the post for more salt. Always at this time, the tenseness of the wrestler imparts itself to the spectators. When this is done, an audible sigh goes up from the spectators, especially if the starting point of the match is long delayed, as it very frequently is. Some will attempt to win by delaying. After the match, the wrestlers return to the post and will again engage in the limber-up exercise. They will lean forward and breathe heavily through the nose in order to get their wind back.

Record of each match is kept by Tanaka, and mistakes of the wrestlers are rectified by Hamanaka, who gives coaching talks and instructions always in Japanese.

In Butte an average of 10-12 wrestlers come out every night. Nearly all of them from Santa Anita. The Turlock group in Canal seem to have a bigger turn out. Groups of Issei men come every night to watch the practice to cheer or jeer, depending upon their whim, particularly when spectacular holds or stratagems are employed. The man who is just about to lose and then turns

the table on his aggressor is always heartily applauded, and frequently given better prizes in the tournaments which follow.

Practice generally lasts from nine to eleven or twelve at night. It is not usual to have sumo in the daylight hours, since it is considered to be more of a sport for night-time. In fact, there are certain taboos regarding its performance during the day which are observed at Gila to the extent of avoiding all sumo practice during the day.

It is in the tournaments, however, that the true Yamato-damashi, the nationalistic and Shinto spirit of Japan is in evidence.

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The Sumo Tournament

In addition to the prestige and acclaim which surrounds participants in the sport of sumo, there is an opportunity to win prizes in the sumo matches which take place with fair regularity every fortnight. Prizes for the participants are donated by various organizations, and by the members of the sumo club who do not participate in the matches, that is to say, by the older men who are concerned in running the club's affairs. The prizes vary from small and inexpensive gifts to cups purchased through the CAS. Sums of money ranging from \$1 to \$5 are also given. The Engei-bu, the Kibei club, and some other organizations devoted to the maintenance of things Japanese, contribute now and again for this prize money. Matches are run off variously as will be described below. They take place with fair regularity every other Saturday. Occasionally, a Canal team made up of thirteen men will meet a Butte team, and also matches will be held within a camp for prizes, cups, and to give the participants an opportunity to raise their rank. The attraction of prizes and the acclaim given to sumo wrestlers makes for a much larger turnout when the formal matches take place than occurs during the practice nights. It will be well to describe the various kinds of sumo matches that have taken place at Gila. Description may be given here of a match in which the writer participated between Butte and Canal, held at Butte in early May. Through the CAS an arrangement was made which permitted the members of the Canal team to visit Butte, a truck being provided for that purpose. The match attracted an audience of over a thousand people. A loudspeaker system was set up to announce the matches. The contests

The Sumo Tournament - 2.

were held for possession of a championship banner made of silk and inscribed in Japanese with the words "The Spirit of Japan is exemplified by friendly wrestling." This banner had twice fallen to the possession of Butte, and now the Canal team challenged for it again. As the challengers, the Canal team occupied the eastern end of the dojo, Butte taking the west. Before the matches begin long speeches are made in Japanese, extolling the sumo participants, discussing the financial condition of Butte sumo club, introducing various people, such as visitors from Poston, the Caucasian heads of CAS, etc. The writer was introduced as a Caucasian participant. Some adverse criticism was levelled against the writer for his participation, but in the main the audience was pleased to see a member of the staff interest himself in a Japanese sport. As the result of the participation in this, and the matches which followed, the writer earned the reputation of being pro-Japanese.

After the introductions of visiting dignataries, the teams of each camp walked up to the dojo and standing in the ring were introduced to the audience in order of rank. In this first match the writer had not as yet been admitted to rank, and so engaged only in an exhibition bout. Exhibition bouts are held in the interim between the actual match engagements. Following the introduction of the teams, the referees and the judges were introduced. The judges made up of a representative from Butte and one from Canal occupied seats at the northwest and southeast corners of the dojo, leaning against the posts supporting the superstructure. They sit on cushions and it is noteworthy that before entering the ring they always remove

The Sumo Tournament - 3.

their shoes. During the various matches, the referees are frequently changed, there sometimes being as many as three referees for one evening's contests. The referee is lightly dressed and appears in the ring barefoot. He is usually an older man who has had some experience with sumo. The referee is equipped with a paddle. This paddle is symbolic of the power wielded by the shogun of old Japan. The paddle is ^{of} black lacquer about 16" in length and fans out to a rough heart shape (See illustration). On it are inscribed the figures of a red sun and a red crescent moon. Two characters appear under these symbols, and in a free translation state "Beneath me wrestling takes place." The paddle is attached at one end by a long red silk rope. When not in use it is always fastened to the northeast post of the dojo. The referee indicates with the paddle progress of the match. There is no refereeing during the practice matches. Following the introduction of the referee the banner over which the contest is held is placed against one post of the dojo. It is noteworthy that the shinto association appears in the matches in the form of the so-called gohei. These gohei are strips of white paper, cut in a peculiar way to form a kind of streamer. Bunches of them are attached to each post of the dojo during contests. They are paper charms to insure against the entrance of malevolent spirits who might cause injury to the wrestlers. Charms and streamers of this kind are in Japan often carried by shinto priests. Always during matches the superstructure of the dojo is decorated in red, white and blue bunting.

Exhibition matches take place first, and often the members of

The Sumo Tournament - 4.

the same team will practice together before the matches begin. The leg exercise described above is always performed before a match. After the exhibition matches and the practice take place, the contest is ready to begin. Each team is composed of thirteen wrestlers. These, according to rank, are variously matched. In the particular match described here these wrestlers engaged a different opponent three times for one fall each. Thus, there were 39 matches in all, there being three series of contests. The purpose of the contest was that of the two teams one was required to win two out of the three series of thirteen matches in the contest. The first series was won by Butte, 8 to 5. The procedure followed is to introduce the wrestlers, the challenger first, calling them up to the center of the ring, where they formally bow. The announcer, usually Tanaka, calls the wrestlers from each side by name. To the name is added the suffix - kun. The sides are called, not by team, but by east and west, respectively. If, for example, Nishimura of Canal were to wrestle Kozai of Butte, the announcement would be given in this way: "Nishi, Nishimura-kun; Higashi Kozai-kun." After the names are called, applause generally follows. The announcement is given in a particularly musical way. The wrestlers then approach the ring, and after bowing go to the post where they are given salt, water, and generally Kleenex with which to wipe their mouths. At the first match, the best wrestler of the team acts as a kind of second, in that he gives the water and the salt to the man about to wrestle. Like everything else in sumo, this procedure is definitely formalized. Both men are obliged to squat on the ground, and the second gives first a cup of

The Sumo Tournament - 5.

water then a cloth to wipe the wrestler's mouth , in this case Kleenex, and finally gives salt. This is given by placing a large amount of salt on the back of the left hand, it is then poured into the wrestler's cupped hands, with the right hand another handful is given. The wrestler then goes to the ring, assuming the stance required by custom. While doing so, he takes some of the salt that has been given him, placing it in his mouth to insure strength. As he leaves for the ring, the second throws a handful of salt at him to make his body strong. With the handful of salt that he is now holding, the wrestler sprays the ground. This is a noteworthy feature of what might be called "contagious magic". At the first match the highest ranking wrestler of the team acts as second. Thereafter the winner of each match remains on the dojo itself to act as second for the next participant. It is thought that some of the luck, strength and skill of these wrestlers will impart itself to the next contestant.

If the first match is lost the original second remains. Usually, however, if the first two or three matches are lost, the second will be replaced by another man, since it is thought that the luck imparted by the second is not holding. The result is then that this whole matter of administering to the contestants is associated with a superstitious concept of good or ill luck.

Following the administration by the second, the contestant, as mentioned above, goes into the ring, where the referee is already standing. With the handle of his paddle, the referee draws a line in the center of the ring. Both men place their closed fists on the

The Sumo Tournament - 6.

ground by this line. As soon as all four fists touch the ground, the wrestlers are ready to start, and so rush at one another, attempting to force each other down on the ground, or to push out of the ring. The referee holds his paddle over the heads of the contestants as they start. As soon as they have wrestled he throws his paddle back, and steps back himself, shouting in the meantime words of encouragement to both wrestlers. Sometimes, one man will delay placing his fists on the ground, so the start of the match will be delayed. One man may rush too soon, at which his opponent will cry "Mata," and the referee will join him by saying "Mata mata" After such a false start, both contestants will usually go back to the salt box for another handful of salt. By this time, the man acting as second has usually retired from the ring. Returning to the ring, the wrestlers engage again. Some matches are over in a matter of seconds, others, especially when the wrestlers manage to grasp each others belts, take considerably longer.

Spectacular matches and close decisions are always applauded. It very frequently happens that the referee is unable to render the decision, and so requests clarification by the judges. At this time, he also consults the coaches, or captains, of the opposing team. A particularly close decision may call for a repeat. During the course of the wrestling, the referee is obliged to use a vocabulary which is entirely associated by the sport of sumo itself, and is made up of archaic words no longer used in everyday speech. The most common cry from the referee is at once a word of encouragement and of warning. This is "Hakyu-ii." This ~~term~~ warning will be shouted a

The Sumo Tournament - 7.

number of times during the course of the match. Finally, as the match is won, the referee, on seeing the decision clearly, will fling his arm out in the direction of the winner, crying "Nishi," or "Higashi" as the case may be. The loser bows himself out of the ring, while the winner remains behind. The loser retires to his companions, who generally assure him that he will do better the next time. The winner remains on the dojo and squats at the edge of the ring itself. The referee, holding the paddle flat by its ends, raises it above the head of the winner and calls in a loud sing-song voice the name of the winner plus the suffix "kun". This suffix is the same that appears in the word "shogun". It is an honorific term meaning lord, or in this case, champion.

It is interesting to note that in spite of a certain amount of proficiency demonstrated at the sport by the writer, this suffix was never used with his name, except once. The writer noted, however, that the referee who used it was criticized by some of the older sumo men. Thus, if the name of the winner were "Nishida", the referee on declaring the winner would hold the paddle over his head and shout "Nishida-kun."

The other contestants when not wrestling sit on mats on the ground and watch the matches. Cigarettes are provided for them, a package to each contestant. The wrestlers on the ground are supposed to sit cross-legged and to move as little as possible. A very grave breach of usage is committed should one of the participants recline. This is thought again to bring about bad luck. The contestants sit in two rows on the mats on the ground in this rather uncomfortable.

The Sumo Tournament - 8.

position for the several hours which the matches take. The rows in which they sit, and the way in which they sit, harks back to the days of the Japanese feudal system. The participants are conceived to be samurai. The dojo itself is conceived to be the place of the shogun, or daimyo. No one may pass between the wrestlers and the dojo, just as in feudal days no one except the shogun himself could pass between his dais and his retainers. No member of the audience, therefore, may pass along the dojo in front of the wrestlers. Sometimes it happens that a dog or a child will inadvertently run between the mound and the wrestlers, who temporarily at least occupy the position of rank. If this happens, the child is generally severely scolded, and the dog is driven away, sometimes cruelly. Once, in the writer's experience, Mr. Walter, the head of CAS, passed between the dojo and the row of wrestlers. A number of adverse criticisms were leveled against him by the Issei spectators. In each case, it is necessary to purify the ground again with salt, and to otherwise remove the stigma and ill-luck which might arise out of such a breach of custom.

The second set of matches was won by Canal 7 to 6, and the third set again by Canal, 7 to 6. Canal had thus won two out of three matches for the evening, and at the end of the thirty nine ~~matches~~ bouts the banner was conferred by the officials. This banner described above is given to the best wrestler of the winning team who accepts it from the referee for his team with a bow. The winning team then parades around the circle on the dojo, The banner is held then by the captain of the winning team. It is mentioned above that the concept of a team and of a captain

+conferring banner go on with discussion of first match.

The Sumo Tournament - 9

organized along western European lines is not pronounced. In Sumo, individual rather than team honors are significant. This idea persists in that the individual wrestlers may get prizes for themselves irrespective of team affiliation. The idea of matching a team from Canal as against a team from Butte may be the result of the American concept of an athletic group operating as a team. In Japan, however, the team concept does exist, and did so even in feudal times. One significant point to be raised, however, is the fact that the emphasis is quite different. Although the group operates as a team, opportunity is always given for the individual to star, and to get prizes and prize money for his participation. Moreover, teams are made up on the spur of the moment from among those wrestlers who appear for the tournament.

A month or more later, after the tournament between Butte and Canal described above, the Butte wrestlers visited Canal, challenging for the banner. This tournament they lost 3 to 0. The Canal sumo men have earned for themselves the reputation of being rough and unsportsmanlike, ^{and} ~~in~~ Butte expressed a reluctance to engage them again. Later in the summer, however, the concept of yamato-damashi will demand that they challenge again for the banner.

After both of these contests, prizes were given to various winners, some prizes being of money and made up by donations from the audience given to an individual because of some spectacular trick employed in the wrestling, or a spectacular win. Everyone on both teams received prizes both times. The writer received two so-called T-shirts and a carton of cigarettes for his participation in the last match mentioned above in Canal. Similar prizes were given

The Sumo Tournament -10.

to every member of the Butte team, even though that team lost. Prizes were supplied for Butte out of the Butte sumo treasury.

During the intermission in these contests a collection is taken up in the audience by the senior members of the club. The money is kept by the club for expenses, although a small sum is turned over to the community activity section. After every match, or rather series of matches, a banquet is held for the wrestlers, being given to them by the senior members. The food varies but is always in Japanese style, with rice, noodles, dikon, very often cuttle-fish or shrimp. One interesting feature is the appearance at these banquets of sandwiches made of peanut butter and jam. This is a great favorite at the center. Every night after practice, also, food is provided for the wrestlers, although it is usually not so elaborate as on days when a formal contest takes place. In the pre-evacuation period, it was considered that no sumo match was complete until everyone became riotously drunk in the banquet which followed. A great favorite with the Los Angeles sumo people was to go to one of the Chinese restaurants following a match to eat prodigious quantities of Chinese food and to drink gallons of sake. The Chinese ginger liquor, ngai pe, was also a favorite. All of the sumo wrestlers and the older men speak nostalgically of these banquets. The liquor, apparently, is missed.

The contests between teams of the camps, of Butte and Canal, are not nearly so typical of this Japanese sport as are the matches which are held intracamp, so to speak. These matches allow for greater individual self-assertion, and are between wrestlers from

The Sumo Tournament - 11

the same camp, the bouts being arranged by the coach and instructors. In Butte, this was done by Tanaka and Hamanaka. Here is an opportunity for the individual to star; usually better prizes are offered at this match in both camps. In a recent match, in late May, gold cups as well as sums of money were offered, each participant, furthermore, obtained a sweat shirt embroidered with the words "sumo" and containing a facsimile in embroidery of the referee's paddle. Under this were the words "Gila Sumo Honbu". These shirts were designed at the camp and are ordered at considerable expense from Los Angeles. The writer was fortunate to obtain one, as well as several other prizes for his participation in this competition.

These matches are run off in the same way with the bunting over the dojo, the gohei on the supporting posts, and with the referee and two judges. The bouts begin with each man wrestling one opponent twice. This takes place until all of the participants have wrestled. If a man wins twice, he is given a winner's prize. If the matches are drawn a deciding one is fought. The winner goes to the edge of the dojo and squats, his hands on his hips, his shoulders and head thrown back, while the referee brings him his prize. This the referee tenders to him on the paddle; the winner takes the prize, raises it above his head, bows to the referee, and his opponent, and returns to his place on the mat with the other wrestlers. The loser, in these contests, always receives a consolation prize. A number of fancy or exhibition matches then take place after everyone has had an opportunity to wrestle three

The Sumo Tournament - 12

times. These may take various forms. For example, in a particular match in which the writer participated, three gold cups were offered as prizes. These gold cups had the word "sumo" written on them and were reserved for the better wrestlers, although everyone had a chance at them. The best man on the team, one who trains arduously by eating, a 21-year old boy named Tracy Goto, standing 6 ft. tall, and weighing 295 lbs., was considered the best in the Butte camp. Five men were selected to wrestle him. In order to win a cup he would have to defeat all five men in succession. If, however, one of them defeated him he would win the cup. This is one form of what is called go-nin-nuki, or five man succession. It so happened that Goto ~~is~~ was defeated by the fifth man, a 200 lb. Japanese named George Imai. Imai then won the cup. Goto received a consolation prize. Another form of the go-nin-nuki is to choose ten men who wrestle successively. After one man has won five matches in succession he is entitled to the prize. The writer did not participate in this competition, which was won again by Imai. Imai won two gold cups. The writer was then put on exhibition in what is called a san-nin-nuki, or three men succession. The writer the three matches, but was given two cartons of cigarettes, apparently bad feeling would have arisen if a cup were given to a Caucasian, in spite of some sympathy and interest by the Issei audience to Caucasian participation.

These matches generally continued from dark until midnight. The form of the go-nin-nuki mentioned above as having been won by Imai ~~is~~ usually takes some time, it being difficult to win five matches in a row. When the match is over the banquet take place

The Sumo Tournament - 13.

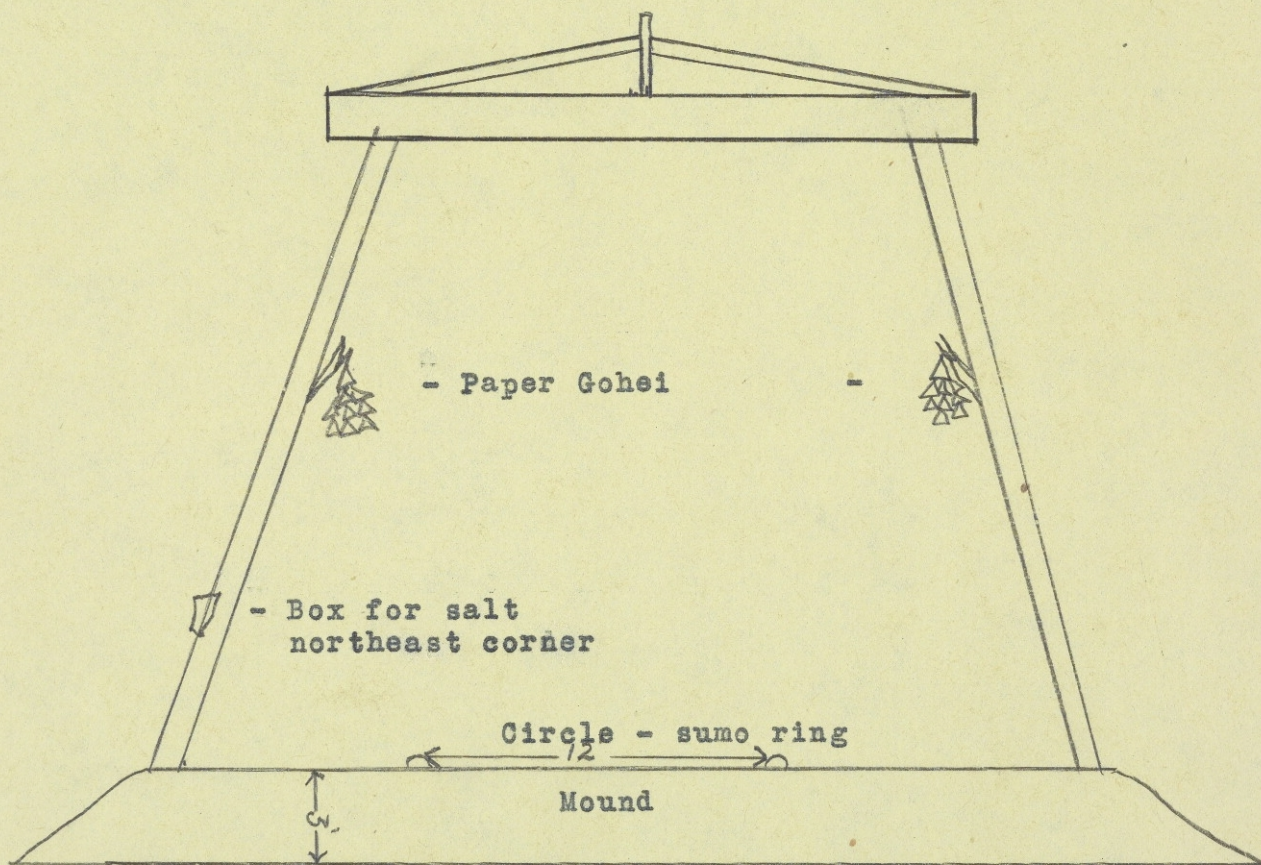
and every participant receives a prize of some kind, thus everyone receives something for participating and for wrestling, two prizes thus being given. Every prize that is given is marked with the character "shō" meaning prize. When the match is finished, the janitors bring the food, take away the salt and the water, wet down the dojo with a hose and smooth out the ring, the dojo is thus always kept in good order.

The general concept at sumo is that it fills the body and fosters the chivalric spirit of Japan, the bushido and damashi concept mentioned above. Most of the participants say "take it easy when you practice, but when you get into a tournament, give him hell." This sums up pretty well the spirit of the sport.

* * * * *

There is some evidence that sumo is allied with types of wrestling found in India, and that it may have spread through China to Japan with Buddhism, Chinese writing and other cultural elements. In its present form, it is purely Japanese, being allied with the animistic practices of Shinto. There is some further suggestion of similar forms of wrestling found among the Oroch, the Tungus, and possibly the Buryat. In short, sumo may be indigenous to Japan, it may have come through China from India, or it may be a part of the circum-polar culture complex which encourages sports of this kind. Wrestling in a not too dissimilar form is notable among the Eskimo.

THE SUMO DOJO - Butte Camp, Gila River Relocation Center



North

